

## Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid *Platanthera leucophaea*

**Habitat:** Mesic to wet tallgrass prairies and sedge meadows

**Blooms:** Mid-June and July. Flowers are white

**Seeds:** Released in early fall

### **Threats:**

- Disappearance of natural habitat
  - Conversion of prairie to cultivated ground
  - Tree and shrub invasion; shade is detrimental to the long-term survival of this species
- Invasion of non-native plants
- Yearly haying can prevent seed maturity and weakens adult plants
- Overgrazing
- Fragmentation of habitat limits the population size of the species of moths that pollinate the orchid
- Herbicide drift



### **Habitat Improvement Guidelines:**

- Early spring burns (by to April 15 in southern Iowa and by April 20<sup>th</sup> in Northern Iowa)
- Fall burns (October or later)
- Woody invasion removal (avoid disturbance of individual plants)
- Limit haying
  - Hay the portion of the site where the orchids do not occur.
  - Hay a portion of a site rather than the entire site.
  - Hay after mid-September to allow seed to mature and disperse
  - Mark the orchids and hay around them
- Limit grazing
- Mechanical harvest of prairie seed should be after September 15
- Hand harvest should be used whenever possible
- Establish new tracts of grassland surrounding existing populations to buffer against herbicide drift